



Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

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Child Protection and Safeguarding

Table of Contents

1. Ethos statement
2. Introduction
3. Key roles and Responsibilities
4. Recognising concerns – signs and indicators of abuse
5. Specific safeguarding issues
6. Online safety
7. Procedures
8. Information sharing, record keeping and confidentiality
9. Managing allegations made against members of staff or volunteers
10. Whistleblowing
11. Useful contacts and links
12. Appendix A – further information on specific safeguarding issues
13. Appendix B – recording form for safeguarding concerns

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Child Protection and Safeguarding

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's** responsibility. **Everyone** who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the **best interests** of the child. (Keeping Children Safe in Education)

1. Ethos statement

Alpha Guardians recognise the moral and statutory responsibility placed on its' staff, students and host families to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people within its' care. We aim to provide a culture of openness where both students, hosts and staff feel secure, are able to raise concerns, believe they are being listened to, and that appropriate action will be taken to keep them safe.

2. Introduction

The safety and the welfare of children "**Child Protection**" means protecting children and young people from physical, emotional or sexual abuse and neglect. In addition, "**Safeguarding**" and promoting the welfare of children, is a broader term than child protection. It encompasses protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of children's health or development, ensuring that children grow up with safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

This policy will be reviewed annually, as a minimum, and will be made available via the Alpha Guardians website or on request.

Compliance with the policy will be monitored by the designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

3. Key roles and responsibilities - Directors

The Managing Director has a legal responsibility to make sure that there are appropriate policies and procedures in place to safeguard and promote children and young people's welfare, and where necessary any appropriate action is taken in a timely manner. The Director will ensure that the policy is made available to hosts, parents and agents by publishing this on the website or in writing if requested.

It is the responsibility of the Managing Director to ensure that staff are properly vetted to make sure they are safe to work and they are trained to an appropriate level and have read and complied with all current safeguarding policies and procedures

The Managing Director will ensure that there is a named person for safeguarding, a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, and will ensure that these people have the appropriate training.

The Directors will receive training at least on an annual basis and more frequent if required.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL should take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety).

The DSL and/or an alternate should always be available for staff, students and hosts to discuss any safeguarding concerns. This is available 24/7.

The DSL will undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills to carry out the role. This training will be updated every two years.

All Staff and Hosts

All staff and hosts have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn and live and must ensure they are familiar with the systems within Alpha Guardians which support safeguarding, including the child protection and safeguarding policy, the terms within the staff contract and host family agreement (where appropriate).

All staff and hosts should be aware of the types of abuse and neglect and should know what to do if a child tells them he/she is being abused or neglected.

All staff, hosts and students will receive safeguarding training at least annually and the date of training will be kept on record.

Local Safeguarding Contacts

The Suffolk SCB (SSCB) details and guidance can be found on their website at:

[http://suffolkscb.org.uk/.](http://suffolkscb.org.uk/)

Role:	Name and contact details:
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Nigel Shaddick 07899958082
Alternate DSL	Sarah Stallard 07715 244499
Alternate DSL/Director	Trudy Jacklin 07454 650644

4. Recognising concerns - signs and indicators of abuse.

All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

Abuse is defined as a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. They may be abused by an adult/adults or another child/children.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

The following indicators listed under the categories of abuse are not an exhaustive list:

Physical abuse: a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. This may also include where an adult/carer deliberately induces illness in a child.

Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding (See section 7: Specific safeguarding issues and Appendix A)

Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protecting a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. (Source Keeping Children Safe in Education)

Child Protection and Safeguarding

5. Specific Safeguarding Issues

Furthermore, behaviours linked to issues such as of drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately missing education and sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) also put children in danger. Some other forms of abuse are also listed below:

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse. It occurs when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact: it can also occur through the use of technology. Like all forms of child sex abuse, child sexual exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex
- can still be abuse even if the sexual activity appears consensual
- can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity
- can take place in person or via technology, or a combination of both
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence
- may occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media)
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse; and
- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the abuse. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of child sexual exploitation:

- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation
- children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends
- children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant
- children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- children who misuse drugs and alcohol
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

FGM (Female Genital Mutilation)

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

Forced Marriage

Forcing a person into marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Some communities use religion and culture as a way to coerce a person into marriage.

'Honour-Based' Violence

Honour-based violence (HBV) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving "honour" often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBV are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBV, or already having suffered HBV.

Peer on Peer Abuse

Staff and hosts recognise that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This may include:

- bullying (including cyberbullying)
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- sexual violence and sexual harassment
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

Alpha Guardians is clear that abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up".

Child Protection and Safeguarding

Prevent and Radicalisation

Children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation.

Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

There is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a child's vulnerability. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media) and settings (such as the internet).

However, it is possible to protect vulnerable people from ideology and intervene to prevent those at risk of radicalisation being radicalised. As with other safeguarding risks, staff and hosts should be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection.

The Prevent duty

Alpha Guardians has a duty of care to prevent students demonstrating extreme views in relation to radicalisation and extremism, to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

6. Online safety

The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues, for example, technology often provides the platform that facilitates child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and sexual predation.

There are three categories of risk:

- Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material, for example, pornography, fake news, racist or radical and extremist views;
- Contact: being exposed to harmful online interaction with other users, for example, commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children or young adults; and
- Conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

Online safety is intended to ensure that:

- Young people are responsible users and stay safe while using the internet, through computers, phones and tablets
- That wherever the internet is used, at school or in the home, everyone is protected from accidental or deliberate misuse that may risk the safety and security of all users.

To do this I must:

- Keep my username and password safe and not share it with anyone.
- Be aware of who I communicate with on line and not share any personal details including my address or telephone number or anything else which could identify me or my homestay.
- Not arrange to meet anyone that is only known to me online.
- Report anything that I feel is unpleasant or inappropriate including messages or anything else which makes me uncomfortable when I see it online.
- Not allow my friends to use the hosts computers or internet without their permission.
- Respect the hosts computers and I will not attempt to download/upload to/from any sites which are illegal or of unknown origin.
- Not open any hyperlinks or attachments in emails unless I know and trust the person/organisation who has sent the email.
- Not download any original work, music or videos where the work is protected by copyright.
- Respect others on the internet. I will not use inappropriate language or swearing. I will not share anything that I do not have permission to share, including photos.

The internet is there to help you with your studies and to help you communicate with your family and friends. It has many uses and being allowed to use it in your hosts home is a privilege, not a right. Therefore, we ask that you respect their system and any time or download restrictions they give you.

We also ask that you use the internet wisely, protecting yourself and others around you.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

7. Procedures

If staff or hosts notice any indicators of abuse/neglect or signs that a child or young person may be experiencing a safeguarding issue they should record their concerns in writing and pass it to the DSL without delay. A suggested format is included below, as a guide.

What to do if you are concerned.

If a child makes an allegation or disclosure of abuse against an adult or other child or young person, it is important that you:

- Stay calm and listen carefully;
- Accept what is being said;
- Allow the child/young person to talk freely – do not interrupt or put words in the child/young person's mouth;
- Only ask questions when necessary to clarify, do not investigate or ask leading questions;
- Reassure the child, but don't make promises which it might not be possible to keep;
- Do not promise confidentiality;
- Emphasise that it was the right thing to tell someone;
- Reassure them that what has happened is not their fault;
- Do not criticise the perpetrator;
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told;
- Make a written record, which should be signed and include the time, date and your position in school;
- Do not include your opinion without stating it is your opinion;
- Pass the information to the DSL or alternate without delay
- Consider seeking support for yourself and discuss this with the DSL as dealing with a disclosure can be distressing.

When a record of a safeguarding concern is passed to the DSL, the DSL will record the time and date the record of concern was received. The DSL will assess the concern and, taking into account any other safeguarding information known about the child/young person, consider whether it suggests that the threshold of significant harm, or risk of significant harm, has been reached

Where the DSL believes that a child or young person may be at imminent and significant harm or risk of harm they should call Customer First immediately, submitting the relevant referral forms within 24 hours. In these circumstances, it is important that any consultation should not delay a referral to Customer First.

Where a safeguarding concern does not meet the threshold, the DSL should record how this decision has been reached and any action that may be taking following this.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

8. Information sharing, record keeping and confidentiality

Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse.

As part of meeting a child's needs, Alpha Guardians understands that it is critical to recognise the importance of information sharing between professionals and local agencies and will contribute to multi-agency working in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children. Where there are concerns about the safety of a child, the sharing of information in a timely and effective manner between organisations can reduce the risk of harm. Whilst the Data Protection Act 2018 places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully, it is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child or vulnerable adult being placed at risk of harm. Similarly, human rights concerns, such as respecting the right to a private and family life would not prevent sharing where there are real safeguarding concerns. Information regarding this can be found at: Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services which supports staff who have to make decisions about sharing information. This advice includes the seven golden rules for sharing information and considerations with regard to the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the DSL or a deputy.

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. All concerns, discussions and decisions made and the reasons for those decisions should be recorded in writing. If in doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss with the DSL.

Alpha Guardians recognises that confidentiality should be maintained in respect of all matters relating to child protection. Information on individual child protection cases may be shared by the DSL or alternate DSL with other relevant members of staff. This will be on a 'need to know' basis and where it is in the child's best interests to do so.

Staff and hosts must never guarantee confidentiality to anyone about a safeguarding concern or promise a child to keep a secret which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

9. Managing allegations made against members of staff or Hosts

Alpha Guardians will follow the SSCB Arrangements for Managing Allegations of Abuse Against People Who Work With Children or Those Who Are in A Position of Trust if an allegation is made against an adult in a position of trust.

An allegation is any information which indicates that a member of staff /hosts may have:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he/she may pose a risk of harm to children.

This applies to any child the member of staff/volunteer has contact with in their personal, professional or community life. It also applies regardless of whether the alleged abuse took place.

Alpha Guardians should report the concern to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day.

The corporate director for Health, Wellbeing and Children's Services, has identified dedicated staff to undertake the role of LADO. LADOs can be contacted via email on LADOCentral@suffolk.gcsx.gov.uk or by using the LADO central telephone number: **0300 123 2044** for allegations against all staff and volunteers.

10. Whistleblowing

Alpha Guardians recognises that students cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

Whistleblowing is 'making a disclosure in the public interest' and occurs when a worker (or member of the wider community) raises a concern about danger or illegality that affects others, for example, pupils in the school or members of the public.

All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions/inactions of colleagues, poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the safeguarding arrangements.

Alpha Guardians would wish for everyone in the working/hosting community to feel able to report any child protection/safeguarding concerns through existing procedures within Alpha Guardians, including the whistleblowing procedure adopted where necessary. However, for members of staff who do not feel able to raise such concerns internally, there is a NSPCC whistleblowing helpline. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 (line available from 8.00am to 8.00pm, Monday to Friday) or email: help@nspcc.org.uk

info@alphaguardians.co.uk
+44 (0)1473 559015



Child Protection and Safeguarding

11. Useful Contacts:

Customer First: 0808 800 4005

LADO central telephone number: **0300 123 2044** for allegations against all staff and volunteers.

Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Professional Helpline: 0345 606 1499

Police (emergency only): 999

Suffolk Police main switchboard: 01473 613500

Suffolk Police Cybercrime Unit: 101

Suffolk Local Safeguarding Children Board www.suffolkscb.org.uk

Suffolk County Council: www.suffolk.gov.uk/community-and-safety/staying-safe-online/e-safer-suffolk/

12. Appendix A

Domestic abuse

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial; and
- emotional

Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. Domestic abuse affecting young people can also occur within their personal relationships, as well as in the context of their home life.

Advice on identifying children who are affected by domestic abuse and how they can be helped is available at:

[NSPCC-UK domestic-abuse signs symptoms effects](#)

[Refuge what is domestic violence/effects of domestic violence on children](#)

[Safelives: young people and domestic abuse](#)

Child Protection and Safeguarding

Additional advice and support

Abuse or Safeguarding issue	Link to Guidance/Advice	Source
Abuse	What to do if you're worried a child is being abused	DfE advice
	Domestic abuse: Various Information/Guidance	Home Office
	Faith based abuse: National Action Plan	DfE advice
	Relationship abuse: disrespect nobody	Home Office website
Bullying	Preventing bullying including cyberbullying	DfE advice
Children missing from education, home or care	Children missing education	DfE statutory guidance
	Children missing from home or care	DfE statutory guidance
Child Exploitation Drugs	Trafficking: safeguarding children	DfE and HO guidance
	Drugs: advice for schools	DfE and ACPO advice
	Drugs strategy 2017	Home Office strategy
Drugs "Honour Based Violence" (so called)	Information and advice on drugs	Talk to Frank website
Child Exploitation Drugs	ADEPIS platform sharing information and resources for schools: covering drug (& alcohol) prevention	Website developed by Mentor UK
	Female genital mutilation: information and resources	Home Office
	Female genital mutilation: multi agency statutory guidance	DfE, DH, and HO statutory guidance
"Honour Based Violence" (so called)	Forced marriage: information and practice guidelines	Foreign Commonwealth Office and Home Office
	Fabricated or induced illness: safeguarding children	DfE, Department for Health and Home Office
Health and Well-being	Rise Above: Free PSHE resources on health, wellbeing and resilience	Public Health England resources
Health and Well-being	Medical conditions: supporting pupils at school	DfE statutory guidance
Homelessness Online		
"Honour Based Violence" (so called)	Mental health and behaviour	DfE advice
	Homelessness: How local authorities should exercise their functions	HCLG
	Sexting: responding to incidents and safeguarding children	UK Council for Child Internet Safety
Private fostering	Private fostering: local authorities	DfE – statutory guidance
	Prevent duty guidance	Home Office guidance
Radicalisation	Prevent duty advice for schools	DfE advice
	Educate Against Hate Website	DfE and Home Office
Private fostering		
Radicalisation	Gangs and youth violence: for schools and colleges	Home Office advice
Violence	Ending violence against women and girls 2016-2020 strategy	Home Office strategy
Radicalisation		
Violence	Violence against women and girls: national statement of expectations for victims	Home Office guidance
Radicalisation		
Violence	Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges	DfE advice
Violence	Serious violence strategy	Home Office Strategy

Child Protection and Safeguarding

13. Appendix B

Record of concern about a child/young person's safety and welfare
Part 1 (for use by any staff – must be handwritten and legible)

Pupil's name:		Date of birth:	
Date & time of incident:		Date & time (of writing):	
Your Name (print):			
Signature:			
Record the following factually: Nature of concern, e.g. disclosure, change in behaviour, demeanour, appearance, injury, witnesses etc. <i>(please include as much detail in this section as possible. Remember – the quality of your information will inform the level of intervention initiated. Attach additional sheets if necessary.</i>			
What is the student's perspective?			
Professional opinion, where relevant <i>(how and why might this have happened?)</i>			
Any other relevant information. Previous concerns etc. <i>(distinguish between fact and opinion)</i>			
Note actions, including names of anyone to whom your information was passed and when			

Check to make sure your report is clear to someone else reading it.

Please pass this form to your DSL without delay